

Wisconsin State Senate  
**John Lehman**  
Senator – 21st District

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**Testimony of State Sen. John Lehman  
Senate Committee on Small Business, Emergency Preparedness,  
Technical Colleges, and Consumer Protection  
Assembly Bill 709  
March 16, 2010**

Chairman Wirsch, members of the committee, I thank you for holding a hearing on Assembly Bill 709.

I joined with Representatives Karl Van Roy and Jim Soletski in introducing this legislation because of the peace of mind it can provide to those who suffer from inflammatory bowel disease (or IBD), Crohn's or ulcerative colitis. These conditions can often make leaving the house for something as simple as a shopping trip downtown or to a mall a stressful situation.

An estimated 20,000 people in Wisconsin suffer from IBS. The pain experienced by many during a flare up of IBS or related disorders can be unbearable, and sufferers are experiencing symptoms may need to access a restroom immediately.

Many who suffer from these ailments have turned to online shopping as a solution to this problem. By allowing these individuals to use employees-only restrooms in retail establishments, we allow those afflicted with these disorders the freedom to leave the house and allow them to patronize local small businesses.

A similar or identical law has been successfully passed in 9 other states including Michigan, Illinois and Minnesota. AB 709 has the support of the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America and the Foundation for Clinical Research in Inflammatory Bowel Disease. Again, I think the committee for their consideration of AB 709. I am available to answer any questions members may have.



# KARL VAN ROY

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

## **Testimony in support of Assembly Bill 709 – Restroom Access Act**

Thank you Chairman Wirsch and members of the committee for taking the time to hold a public hearing on this important legislation. I appreciate you scheduling the bill so promptly given the lateness of the legislative session. I'm pleased to report that this bill has already passed an Assembly Committee on a unanimous vote and it passed the Assembly floor on a voice vote. No individual or group has registered or testified in opposition to this legislation.

Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD), which includes Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, is a chronic disorder that causes inflammation in the gastrointestinal tract. IBD symptoms come on suddenly and urgently and include severe abdominal pain and diarrhea. Individuals experiencing symptoms need access to the most conveniently located bathrooms without delay.

A constituent of mine who has Crohn's disease brought to my attention the story of teenager Ally Bain, a fellow Crohn's sufferer in Illinois. At the age of 14, Ally was shopping at a national retail clothing store with her mother when her Crohn's disease suddenly flared up and she had to use the restroom immediately. They asked an employee and then a manager for permission to use the employee-only restroom, but she was refused by both of them because of what they called, "store policy." As a result, Ally suffered a humiliating accident right there in the store. Ally and her mother vowed to make sure that this situation never happened again to her or anyone else suffering from IBD.

Ally and her mother worked with their state legislator to find a solution, and they got "Restroom Access Act" legislation passed in Illinois in 2005, also known as "Ally's Law". Assembly Bill 709 is similar to Ally's law. Under AB 709, retail establishments with at least three employees on duty must provide access to employee-only restrooms to those individuals who have Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis or use an ostomy device when a public restroom is not readily available. Businesses do not have to make any alterations to their facilities to accommodate these individuals, and they are protected from liability if someone accessing the employee-only restroom would get hurt. Businesses do not have to allow access if it creates an obvious health or safety risk to the person or an obvious security risk to the business. In addition, AB 709 requires the person to show a doctor's note or approved ID card that shows he or she has an eligible medical condition.

In addition to Illinois, similar Restroom Access laws already exist in Minnesota, Michigan, Texas, Tennessee, Colorado, Kentucky, Washington, and Connecticut. Bills also have been proposed in Delaware, Florida, Massachusetts, Ohio, New York, New Jersey, Georgia, Missouri, Virginia, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Wyoming, South Carolina, Rhode Island, Indiana, and Pennsylvania.

### **Van Roy Testimony in support of Assembly Bill 709 Restroom Access Act (cont'd)**

According to the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America, 1.4 million people nationwide suffer from Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis, of which it is estimated 20,000 live in Wisconsin. At least 10% of sufferers are under the age of 18. Alarming, studies show that Wisconsin has the highest incidence rate of pediatric Crohn's Disease in the world. AB 709 is a good, bi-partisan bill that will help constituents in all of our districts.

My late sister had Crohn's disease, and it took me a while before I fully realized what a person with Crohn's has to go through on a daily basis. They suffer in silence because it is a very private and personal ailment. For those who suffer from these disorders, this is not a trivial or laughing matter. Going out in public is an extremely scary thought when you don't know if you will have access to a toilet when you need it. The fear of having a humiliating accident in public makes IBD sufferers shy away from going out in public and they often become reclusive in their own homes.

AB 709 restores the confidence and the freedom for people to go out in public once again due to the fact that a toilet facility will be available when they need it. The Restroom Access Act is an important quality of life bill that will make a positive difference in the lives of many without being a burden on businesses. In fact, local businesses will benefit because these individuals will now venture outside and shop in hometown stores rather than buy from out-of-state stores over the internet.

#### **Known Supporters of the bill include:**

Ally Bain, the originator of "Ally's Law", and her mother Lisa Bain  
Wisconsin Chapter of the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America  
International Foundation for Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders  
Foundation for Clinical Research in IBD  
United Ostomy Associations of America, Inc.  
Green Bay Area Ostomy Support Group  
Beloit Area Ostomy Support Group  
Jefferson County Ostomy Support Group  
Fox Valley Ostomy Support Group  
Chippewa Valley Ostomy Association  
Waukesha Ostomy Support Group  
Tri-State Wisconsin Ostomy Support Group

Thank you for your time, and I would urge the committee to hold an executive session soon to pass AB 709.

Now, I will turn it over to Dan Young, Research Assistant to Rep. Jim Soletski who has co-sponsored this bill with me.

Members of the Senate Committee on Small Business, Emergency Preparedness, Technical Colleges, and Consumer Protection:

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My name is Samantha Toigo and I am a 22-year-old recent Marquette graduate originally from Green Bay. I'm now working as an accountant in Milwaukee. I would like to thank you for bringing AB 709, the Restroom Access Act, to a public hearing. As a Crohn's disease patient, this bill means a lot to me and all the other thousands of Wisconsin residents with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). I have corresponded with Representatives Van Roy and Soletski several times over the past few months to lend my support to this bill and I am thrilled that it is finally before the public.

I was diagnosed with Crohn's disease last March after suffering the symptoms for about two years without knowing the cause. For those two years I dealt with excruciating abdominal pain and hours of diarrhea whenever I drank caffeine or ate fruits, vegetables, or spicy food, among other causes. I'll spare you the medical details. What disappointed me even more was that I missed out on several once-in-a-lifetime events, not to mention hours of valuable study time, during my last year of college because I was having flares and couldn't leave my apartment.

No matter how well controlled our cases are, IBD patients like me live in constant fear of a sudden flare-up, whether it's due to stress, hormones, something we eat or drink, or even no trigger at all. Even a mild Crohn's or colitis episode can put a patient out of commission for an entire day or night, and in more severe cases patients may spend weeks or even months in the hospital recovering from a flare or surgery.

Crohn's, colitis, and ostomy patients want to live their lives as normally as possible. When our disease flares up when we're in public, patients need to have easy, quick access to a restroom, or we could encounter a situation a *thousand* times more embarrassing than a college student explaining to her friends that she's missing out on an important commitment because of her bowels. Opening employee restrooms to patients with these qualifying conditions when they are in need will help to increase their quality of life and ease their anxiety about going to new or unfamiliar places of business.

That is why I urge you to join me in supporting the Restroom Access Act. AB 709 will enhance the quality of life for gastrointestinal patients by asking retail establishments to extend them a simple act of kindness when they are in need.

I am aware that small business owners have concerns over the impact this bill would have on them, whether it is safety-related or concerns about over-regulation. I feel that the conditions that would be required for this act to be enforced, including the requirement of having at least three employees working, there being no safety hazard in getting to the restroom, and exemption from liability for injuries of the customer are sufficient to preclude any major impact on business as usual for employers.

I would also hope that most employees in Wisconsin would be kind enough to grant someone with these medical conditions access to the restroom. I share the same fear of over-regulation as the small business owners do, but I simply see this law as protection for the patients who might encounter the rare situations where that simple kindness is not

shown. As awful as it is, this has been the case in several situations in the USA, including the case of Ally Bain in Illinois, as well as several cases in the UK.

Thanks in large part to Ally, a teenage IBD patient who started the national push for acts similar to this one, bills like AB 709 have already been passed or are pending in a majority of states, and it's time for Wisconsin to join them. The Milwaukee area alone has the highest number of pediatric IBD patients in the country, and if not for Crohn's and colitis patients in general, I ask you to strongly consider this bill for those children who will live with these diseases for their entire lives or until we find a cure.

To the members of the Committee and the State Senate, please know that by making this bill law, you will truly make a huge difference in the lives of thousands of Crohn's, colitis and ostomy patients across the state. Thank you for your time, and thank you to Representatives Van Roy and Soletski and Senator Lehman as well as all of the others who have worked so hard to make the Restroom Access Act a reality.

Sincerely,

Samantha M. Toigo

Kenneth Kwaterski  
836 E. Foxmoor Lane  
Appleton, WI 54911

Members of the Senate Committee on Small Business, Emergency Preparedness,  
Technical Colleges, and Consumer Protection,

My name is Kenneth Kwaterski, I am 19 years old and a Wisconsin native. At the age of 17 I was diagnosed with colitis, a form of Inflammatory Bowel Disease similar to Crohn's, the only difference is the location of the disease. Intestinal disorders are a big part of my life as both of my older sisters have been diagnosed with IBD. It has been a challenge for all three of us in our treatments of the disease, however we do not let it affect our day-to-day lives.

I first found out about the Restroom Access Act (AB 709) a year ago, at the time I knew it as "Ally's Law" named for the girl who at 15 began work to start this very bill. Shortly after I got in contact with her, Ally Bain, and asked what I could do to get this passed in Wisconsin. I am glad Rep. Van Roy has reintroduced it into legislature.

In response to much criticism this Act has faced, I simply ask those who are opposed; how will this really affect your daily actions? This Act is only meant to provide peace of mind for all patients with these kinds of disorders so they can go out patronizing their favorite businesses. How can business owners oppose this Act, when the goal is to keep the customers happy and coming back? I for one would not return to a business if I were treated poorly for whatever reason, not just being denied a restroom. I am stunned to hear some critics' claim this would open up the door for possible thefts, etc. However, I assure you when an IBD patient like myself is experiencing symptoms the only thing on our mind is avoiding accident and finding a restroom. Your morals must be completely out of whack if you impersonate someone with Crohn's just to gain access to the backrooms of businesses in order to "case the joint." I know this is a very strong opinion but I can guarantee if you know someone or have this disease you are appalled to hear people would think this way. Crohn's and colitis are very misunderstood diseases, but are diseases nonetheless and affect people just as much as diabetes. Another task I hope this Act accomplishes is increasing awareness for such disease so that in the future laws like this aren't even needed because people understand the situation. It's incredible we even need a law to say you can use the bathroom; I'm sorry I know you are in pain and crumpled on the floor, but our bathroom is for employees only. It's easy to hope that those who turn people's request for a bathroom down one day find themselves in a similar situation, but that wouldn't solve the problem; and as Ghandi said "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind." So let us be grown ups here and get past our petty concerns and let people take care of one simple need. To put in perspective, it is difficult enough living with a disease that can be embarrassing, but denying us a restroom when desperately needed is the same as refusing insulin to a diabetic.

Thank you for your consideration on the Restroom Access Act



Kenneth Kwaterski  
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3/10/10

## KOMO News - Seattle, Washington

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Became law  
in 2009

# Pearl Jam star lobbies for restroom access

by BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press Writer

Originally printed at <http://www.komonews.com/news/38668717.html>

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) - As the lead guitarist for Seattle rock band Pearl Jam, Mike McCready has toured the world, won a Grammy and performed with the Rolling Stones.

But as McCready knows, there are some things fame can't get you. And sometimes, that means getting to a restroom in time.

McCready suffers from Crohn's disease, a painful gastrointestinal disorder that can make finding restrooms an extremely urgent and embarrassing task. On Thursday, he asked Washington state lawmakers to mandate emergency access to businesses' private restrooms for sufferers of Crohn's and related disorders.

"Imagine the worst diarrhea you've ever had, and then times it by 10, with a knife in it," McCready said after testifying before a legislative committee. "You have maybe a half-a-second to find out where a bathroom is."

The proposal would require retailers without public restrooms to allow people with inflammatory bowel diseases to use employee restrooms, provided an identification card or a letter from a doctor or nurse is shown.

There would be some exceptions for small businesses, but if the bill becomes law, those who refuse to open up their restrooms to qualified people could eventually be fined \$100.

Illinois, Michigan and Texas have passed similar laws, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

The bill's sponsor, Rep. Marko Lias, D-Mukilteo, said the idea came from a constituent with Crohn's disease. Statistics show nearly 30,000 people in Washington are affected by inflammatory bowel disease, Lias said.

"In general, as a society, we are loath to talk about the restroom and going to the restroom," Lias said. "For many people, the simple act of going to the restroom can be an excruciating experience."

McCready said his Crohn's attacks often happen at the most inopportune moments.

<http://www.komonews.com/internal?st=print&id=38668717&path=/news>

02/16/2010

"I was in the middle of a solo and it hit, and I can't go anywhere because I'm playing in front of 20,000 people," McCready told The Associated Press after he testified. "So I just let go. I went back stage and cleaned up, because the show must go on."

Another attack happened just before McCready took the stage during a Pearl Jam-Rolling Stones concert, leaving him rushing for a portable toilet.

Pearl Jam made its name in the early 1990s, part of an explosion of grunge rock acts that helped put Seattle on the map.

The band also is known for publicly fighting ticket-sales giant Ticketmaster, but McCready said he was still nervous testifying at the state House Judiciary Committee.

Officials from bank and restaurant associations raised some concerns about the proposed law.

Washington Restaurant Association lobbyist Michael Transue said allowing members of the public with inflammatory bowel diseases to use employee restrooms could create safety issues, particularly if they had to travel through busy kitchens during peak business hours.

"We're very sympathetic to the issue presented," Transue said. "To allow folks in these situations to use our employee restrooms is the humane and compassionate thing to do ... that said, imposing mandatory requirements" is not fair to businesses.

McCready said a law is needed because many businesses are insensitive to the needs of people who have diseases like Crohn's. He said there are a number of businesses he won't patronize because they've denied him emergency restroom access.

Over the past 20 years he estimates that he's had "hundreds" of accidents. But while Crohn's disease has been a public embarrassment for him, he said officials should remember the everyday people who suffer with similar disorders.

"I'm 42 years old. I'm doing fine," he said. "But when you're 13 or 14 and you're going through those years with the shame and indignation - it's embarrassing."



## Opening Doors

~~The story of Ally's Law - Legislating access to restrooms~~

By Joanne Olshan

Ally Bain could not have predicted the enormous effect she would have on peoples' lives, particularly those living with inflammatory bowel disease, an ostomy or related conditions. Something profound happened to this young girl from the suburbs of Chicago when she was only 14. It was a humiliating incident, not something you'd readily share with others and certainly not with strangers. But that's exactly what Ally Bain did.

In 2001, Ally was plagued with stomach aches and fevers that proved to be much more serious than a lingering case of the flu or lactose intolerance. She was diagnosed with Crohn's disease (CD) at only eleven years old. While there is no cure for this autoimmune disorder involving the gastrointestinal tract, some cases can be managed with medication. It may even go into remission with no symptoms at all, but it is a chronic condition that can flare up at any time. Some cases can be severe enough to require an ostomy. Living with CD can be a lot to deal with for an adult, let alone a child.

Ally was determined to live life as normally as possible, so she persevered at school, took a regimen of medication and developed a high tolerance for pain. She entered high school in 2004 as the fevers and stomach aches persisted and trips to the restroom became increasingly more frequent, sometimes up to 40 times per day. When curious classmates asked why she made so many trips to the restroom, she simply told them.

Ally explains, "I wanted to be straightforward with people. I didn't want the disease to mask the rest of my life and by telling people what was going on, I built a stronger support system." Her greatest supporters are her parents who, despite Ally's praise, say there were times when they felt helpless. Her mother kept Ally on a regular routine hoping it would help her daughter cope and remembers that, "Finding the right mixture or the right medication was difficult. She had been on medication for a while without much success."

On one seemingly ordinary day, Ally and her mom went shopping at a popular retail store. Suddenly, Ally began to feel pain and needed to use the restroom. Lisa asked one of the store employees if her daughter could use the washroom, but was told no. As Ally's discomfort intensified, her mother asked to speak with the manager who also denied a growingly uncomfortable Ally access to their bathroom.

Lisa tried desperately to make the manager understand Ally's medical condition and the urgency of having to use the restroom. Her daughter stood by her side with both arms wrapped around her stomach in excruciating pain. The manager was adamant in his refusal, claiming that company policy did not allow him to do otherwise. He suggested that they go across the street where there was a public washroom. That was not a realistic option and consequently, Ally had an accident in the store.

As mother and daughter headed for home, Lisa's anger was palpable. She vowed never to let Ally be humiliated like that ever again. "At that moment I didn't really know what I was going to do about it. I was very, very upset," recalls Lisa.

She called the corporate headquarters of the store and e-mailed the CEO who implemented a new store policy regarding the use of the employee restroom effective the day after he was contacted by Lisa. But it didn't stop there. Ally's father contacted the media. The first reporter to cover the story was Neelia Kwan from the NBC affiliate in Chicago and not long after, every media outlet in Illinois told the story of the 14-year-old girl with CD who was denied access to the restroom.

And that might have been the end of it had Ally not remembered the field trip that her eighth-grade class took to Springfield, IL, for a tour of the state capitol. Ally met Illinois State Representative Kathleen Ryg of the 59th district who told the eighth-graders to be sure to contact her if they ever needed anything. Ally decided to take Representative Ryg up on her offer.

After Ryg was contacted by Ally and her mom, she did some research and discovered that there were no restroom access laws in Illinois. So, she and Ally wrote the language for a proposed bill, appropriately named Ally's Law. Eventually, it was introduced to a judiciary committee, the majority of whom had a legal background. Ryg based the wording on similar initiatives in other states and had the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America review the proposal.

But, Ryg said, "I learned that even good ideas can be a problem." Putting new requirements on retailers meant securing their support, so she reached out to the Retail Merchants Association and the Convenience Store Operators. In some cases, it was argued, the proposed legislation was not feasible for safety reasons and the lack of employees in some convenience store operations. Adjustments would need to be made.

Ally at a press conference for the University of Chicago Medical Center. She read her poem about her stay in the hospital for Crohn's - she was 16.

And while the groundwork for the proposed legislation was successful, Ally's original condition seemed to be stabilizing.



Absent days at school started to accumulate, but she tried hard to keep up with all the work. At one point, the severity of her pain was so bad that during an examination when a doctor gently touched Ally's stomach, she nearly leaped off the table. Her CD caused a perforation of the colon and she needed emergency surgery.

At Advocate Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge, IL, part of Ally's diseased intestine was removed and a temporary colostomy was created. This involved bringing one end of the large intestine through the skin for a stoma and temporarily stapling closed the other end. The emergency surgery was a success, but learning how to change her ostomy bag was challenging.

In January of 2005, Ally traveled to Springfield to testify in front of the judiciary committee. When she was called upon to speak, she read a couple of paragraphs that she had written in her hotel room the night before. Ally was very poised as she articulated what had happened to her and why a law was needed.

According to Ally, "When I was done the committee members' faces expressed anger and empathy." Representative Ryg also addressed the committee, as well as the convenience store operators and the merchants that were in attendance. Representative John Fritchey encouraged everyone to get this passed because he has a "dear friend" with Crohn's disease. There was such over-whelming support, that the bill passed on "unanimous leave" meaning that there was no need to vote.

Representative Ryg then presented the bill to the Illinois House of Representatives, where it also passed unanimously and then to the Illinois Senate where it was again very well received in another undivided vote. Representative Bill Black applauded the effort and encouraged everyone to vote for it. And all along the way, the list of Ally's Law supporters grew, including the petroleum industry and UCB Pharmaceutical Company as well as support from individuals who wrote letters when they heard about Ally's story through the extensive media coverage.

In August of 2005, eight months after legislation was first introduced by Ally and Representative Ryg, the Restroom Access Act, commonly known as Ally's Law, was signed into law by Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich. The law requires businesses to make employee-only restrooms available to people with CD, inflammatory bowel disease and other eligible medical conditions including those who utilize an ostomy device, are pregnant or have incontinence.

Restrooms have to be located in areas that will not present a risk to the customer or a security risk to the retail establishment which must have three or more employees and does not include gas stations. Proof of a medical condition is not required to access an employee-only restroom as merchants are expected to be aware of the law; however, CCFA offers a card which one can present if necessary.

During the same year Dr. Fichera at the university of Chicago medical center children's hospital performed her second surgery to take down the ostomy and reconnected her intestine. This time however, Ally's recovery didn't go as smoothly as the first surgery. One week after being released from the hospital, she was re-admitted because of an infection. With fevers that spiked to 104 degrees and two different strains of bacteria in her blood, Lisa was told that her daughter would either get better or end up in intensive care. Slowly but surely, Ally began to show signs of improvement until she was well enough to go home following a month-long stay in the hospital.

Dr. Rubin took Ally off all previously prescribed medications and started a new treatment regimen. By now a 16-year-old high school sophomore, Ally seemed to thrive. She developed a very close relationship with Dr. Rubin, who she sees every three months for check-ups and to chat about things that are medically unrelated.

Ally had one more surgery in 2006 to remove some scar tissue that was practically closing her intestine. Her CD has been in remission for two years now and she looks to the future without trepidation. Both Lisa and Ally emphasize the importance of having a great doctor/patient relationship.

"Doctors need to be pro-active. They need to be three steps ahead and you need to believe in them. The doctors who tell you to feel free to get a second opinion are the ones you want to see," asserts Lisa.

Ally continues to inspire others to initiate Ally's Law in the state where they live. The law has passed in IL, TX, MN, KY and CO. It is pending in ten more states. If you're interested in starting a restroom access initiative, you can visit [www.crohnsandme.com](http://www.crohnsandme.com) and click on the "Advocacy Center" link.

You'll find information about sending a letter or e-mail to your state representative to make them aware of Ally's law and get the process going. Ally recommends that you include personal experiences. You can also read the Restroom Access Act law by simply entering it in any search engine.

"As more and more states pass the law, it shows there is a need and puts it on the radar for federal legislators," said Ryg. In an effort to speed up that process, she and Ally are planning a letter writing campaign to all state senators which will include information about Ally's Law, her personal story and a call to action.



Ally Bain with her mother Lisa.

Ally is now a freshman in college. She also has an occasional speaking engagement where she talks about living with CD and the undignified circumstance that ultimately resulted in Ally's Law. "Try not to keep your condition secretive," advises Ally. "It helps to be vocal about it. Know that you're not alone. Have a good relationship with your doctor and surround yourself with people who support you. There are answers out there." And perhaps no one knows that better than Ally Bain.



Nancy J. Norton  
President and Founder

## International Foundation for Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders

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March 11, 2010

The Honorable Karl Van Roy and  
Members of the Senate Committee on Small Business, Emergency  
Preparedness, Technical Colleges, and Consumer Protection  
123 West  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 8953  
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Representative Van Roy and Committee Members:

As president of the Wisconsin-based nonprofit organization, the International Foundation for Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders (IFFGD), I am writing to let you know that IFFGD strongly supports legislation Assembly Bill 709, also known as the *Restroom Access Act*, for its provisions requiring businesses to make employee-only restrooms available to people with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), inflammatory bowel disease, incontinence, and other medical conditions. Furthermore, the IFFGD calls on other members of the Wisconsin State Legislature to show strong character and leadership by supporting Assembly Bill 709 as well.

IFFGD was founded in 1991 to inform, assist and support people affected by functional gastrointestinal and motility disorders, such as IBS. IBS affects more than 30 million men and women, an estimated 10 to 15 percent of the U.S. population. It is a chronic illness characterized by unpredictable pain and bowel symptoms. It is a potentially disabling condition that is invisible to others.

Since founding IFFGD, I, personally, have talked to thousands of patients who must live with the daily challenges of IBS. Many patients manage the symptoms that can flare-up with no warning by staying home more often as a way to accommodate them. They no longer participate fully in daily life.

On a personal level, I can attest to the need to know that a bathroom is available if needed. I founded IFFGD because of my own experiences with digestive disorders. I can say from personal experience that many people do not understand when I tell them I cannot wait to use the bathroom. To know that a bathroom would be available would make a difference to me and to all others who have digestive disorders.

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**Representative Karl Van Roy and Committee Members ... 2**

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This bill will help educate store owners about the need to provide bathrooms to people with digestive disorders. It also will help reassure those of us who are affected that we can go out in public knowing a bathroom will be available if necessary.

On behalf of all the people affected by digestive conditions, I thank you for introducing Assembly Bill 709, and I encourage the Wisconsin State Legislature to move this bill forward.

Sincerely,



Nancy J. Norton  
President and Founder



# CROHN'S & COLITIS FOUNDATION OF AMERICA

WISCONSIN CHAPTER

February 11, 2010

The Honorable Karl Van Roy  
90th Assembly District  
123 West, State Capitol  
P.O. Box 8953  
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Representative Van Roy,

The Crohn's & Colitis Foundation fully supports the Wisconsin Assembly Bill 709 and thank you for helping improve the lives of the over 25,000 Wisconsin residents living with Inflammatory Bowel Disease.

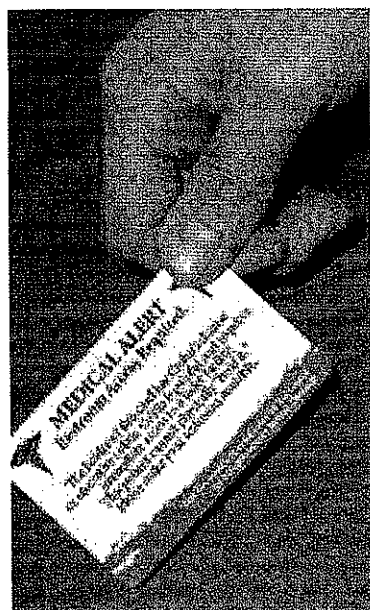
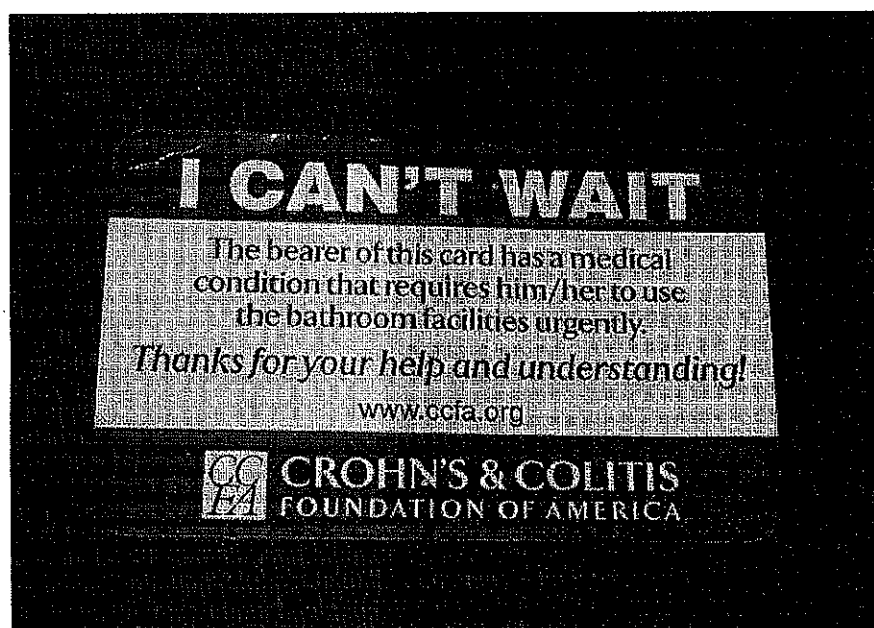
Our Mission at the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation is *To cure Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, and to improve the quality of life of children and adults affected by these diseases.* We sincerely appreciate the work you are doing, as it is furthering our mission.

Regards,

Tyler Hillstrom  
Executive Director  
CCFA - WI Chapter

1126 South 70th Street, Suite S210A West Allis, WI 53214  
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A Proud Member of Community Health Charities

Samples of Identification cards:



The card reads:

**MEDICAL ALERT**

**Restroom Access Required**

The holder of this card has Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis. Colitis is painful and requires immediate access to a toilet facility.

This patient cannot physically "hold it."

Please make your restroom available.

**THE FOUNDATION FOR CLINICAL RESEARCH  
IN INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE**

2595 S. Trillium Circle  
Green Bay, WI 54313  
March 14, 2010

Re: Wisconsin Restroom Access Legislation

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To Whom it May Concern...

I understand you are considering passing legislation for access to restrooms in medical emergency situations. I would like to tell you emphatically to **vote YES** for it!

I have had an ileostomy for 22 years and had ulcerative colitis for 8½ years prior to that. Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD - ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease) is a horrible thing to live with. It usually strikes those in their teens and 20s and can last a lifetime. I had urgent diarrhea (needing a restroom within a minute or two of the "feeling"), 10 - 25 times a day for most of the 8½ years I had it. I stayed home most of the time for fear of an "accident".

Many stores would not let me use their restrooms and would tell me to go to the central restrooms in the mall. They were too far away and would take too long to get to. I often had two tiny children in tow. So I stayed home. What a life to live all of my 30s!

Now that I have my ileostomy, I no longer have colitis. However, on rare occasions, I "spring a leak" where my ostomy appliance loosens and stool gets all over me and my clothing. In these rare situations, it would be wonderful to know that I could immediately get to a restroom to care for myself before the damage got too bad. Right now, that is not always the option because many stores still restrict people like me from using their restroom.

Those of us afflicted with IBD and ostomies would love the freedom of knowing that we would no longer be in embarrassing, devastating situations when medical emergencies arise. We would NOT abuse the privilege! It would allow us to lead a more normal life.

Please vote to enact the Restroom Access legislation!!

Sincerely,

Chris Demeuse  
(920) 499-8742

**Hein, Tanya**

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**From:** Kolar, Debra A. [Debra.Kolar@NWTC.EDU]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 15, 2010 1:39 PM  
**To:** Sen.Wirch  
**Cc:** Rep.Van Roy; Barb Drzewiecki; ndavis@ccfa.org  
**Subject:** Bill 146.29  
**Importance:** High

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Dear Senator Wirch;

I hope this isn't too late; I realize there is a public hearing tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. on this Bill.

I cannot express how important this issue is for those of us who suffer from Crohn's or Colitis. I am a 43 year old woman who was diagnosed several years ago with Ulcerative Colitis. I currently take medication every day to keep me "in remission" from flare ups, however I still suffer them. The medication requires blood work every six months for adverse liver reaction. I am currently taking a high dose, six week regimen of prednisone to conquer a flare up. I have eaten one piece of toast today. As Crohn's and Colitis sufferer's we know that everything that goes in, must come out, those of us with these diseases often have no control of "when" that happens..... we just pray we have access to or can make it to a bathroom.

These are painful and humiliating disease's. Many people will not talk openly about them, I however will talk to anyone and everyone if it helps make life with these conditions tolerable. My condition has caused me to avoid going places that do not have access to restrooms.

I returned last week Thursday from a vacation in Cancun. I brought a note from my doctor that I could share with the airline in the event I had to use the restroom on the plane during the time when they tell you "you must remain seated". One flight attendant told me if I had a condition that would cause a "rule" to be broke, I should not be allowed to fly. ARE YOU KIDDING ME???? Because I may need to use a bathroom??? The stress of this alone caused me unnecessary anxiety.

This Bill is a start to helping those of us with these diseases. I appreciate your support.

Thank you for your time.

Debra Kolar  
3494 Mardon Lane  
Green Bay, WI 54313

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03/15/2010



Date: March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010

To: ~~Chairman Wirch and Senate Committee on Small Business, Emergency~~  
Preparedness, Technical Colleges, and Consumer Protection

Regarding: Assembly Bill 709

Position: Support

Thank you Chairman Wirch, Representative Van Roy, Representative Soletski, and Members of the Committee for having me here today in order to discuss the importance of Assembly Bill 709. I have been living with Crohn's Disease for four years now, and I was diagnosed during my junior year of high school in 2006 after enduring nearly a year of ongoing, agonizing, and unidentifiable pain. It was another year of ups and downs, however, before I finally had my disease under control. At the time of my diagnosis I weighed only ninety pounds, and suffered from excruciating bouts of stomach pain, diarrhea, excess gas, and fatigue. Once properly diagnosed I learned all I could about the specifics of my disease, including the fact that it was a chronic and often embarrassing illness that I would have to learn to live with throughout the rest of my life. When afflicted with Crohn's Disease, one must learn to live with the unexpected. It is a terrifying thing, not having control over your own bodily functions, and not knowing when or where an urgent trip to the bathroom may be required. It is especially unsettling in unfamiliar public places, where the locations of the nearest restroom may be unknown or unmarked. While most girls my age scour public arenas for the best restaurants or the greatest shopping bargains, I am always in search of the nearest restroom, never knowing when an urgent need for one will arise.

Unfortunately, living with Crohn's Disease does not allow sufferers the luxury of time. In fact, time becomes a limited window of opportunity. If there is not an accessible public restroom near enough to an individual in order to immediately accommodate them, there may very well be an accident. Assembly Bill 709 is essential in maintaining the physical and mental health of individuals with Inflammatory Bowel Diseases. Living with an incurable disease of unknown etiology is difficult for all, and the passage of this legislation into law will make a world of a difference to those suffering with IBD. With a disease that keeps the afflicted living in the unknown, the comfort and security that this law will provide will be monumental in the assurance of worry-free public environments for all IBD patients. I encourage you to vote in favor of passing Assembly Bill 709 into law, for it will undoubtedly ease the minds of countless Wisconsinites who are currently hesitant in venturing to many a public place. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Sydney Allen', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sydney Allen  
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Sydney.allen@marquette.edu